

Marco Brusotti & Herman Siemens (eds.), *Nietzsche's Engagements with Kant and the Kantian Legacy, Volume I: Nietzsche, Kant, and the Problem of Metaphysics*. London: Bloomsbury, 2017. xix + 298 pp. ISBN: 978-1-4742-7477-7. Hardcover, \$114.00 (volume); \$256.00 (collection).

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*Nietzsche, Kant, and the Problem of Metaphysics* is the first of three volumes meant to address Nietzsche's relation to Kant and Kantian philosophy. This volume addresses how Nietzsche rejects, adopts, and reformulates Kantian epistemology and metaphysics. In what follows I go through the book chapter-by-chapter, providing a brief summary before a brief commentary.

The Introduction is very helpful. Brusotti and Siemens start by doing an impressive job elucidating the young Nietzsche's acquaintances with Kant. This section is a must-read. They then lay the groundwork for Nietzsche's later criticisms of Kant and provide an instructive outline of the volume's contributions.

There is one lacuna, however. The title of the volume includes "*the problem of metaphysics*." However, we are not told what that problem is, and the editors do not tie the title to the explanation of the contributions to the volume. The back of the book suggests that the problem of metaphysics is Kant's critique of metaphysics. But this critique is multifaceted, and there are important pieces missing from the volume's focus on the possibility of metaphysics. The most noticeable might be this: Kant's critique of metaphysics turns on an ingenious positive picture of how metaphysics is possible, but no contributor to the volume addresses what Nietzsche's positive view of the possibility of metaphysics might be—and I think there is ample

room for one (see Remhof, J., “Nietzsche: Metaphysician,” *Journal of the American Philosophical Association*, forthcoming). It might have been best just to drop the specification from the title.

The book begins with John Richardson’s illuminating piece on how Nietzsche naturalizes Kant’s transcendental approach to the nature of the subject. For Richardson, Nietzsche reconceives Kant’s logical understanding of the conditions of the possibility of experience with causal conditions behind different forms of biological existence. These causal conditions lead us to accept certain posits as true, such as the idea that thinking requires a unified subject, which Nietzsche takes to be strictly false. According to Richardson, Nietzsche thinks higher forms of life like the *Übermensch* are those that can “incorporate” the truth that certain life-enabling posits are strictly false. For example, those who are higher might embrace the difficult truth that thinking need not require a unified subject.

If I were to raise any questions about Richardson’s reading, it would concern how incorporating more truth relates to creating new values when it comes to features of higher forms of life. Might one be prior to or more important than the other? Could they work in tandem, and if so how? In all, Richardson’s chapter does a nice job bringing to light underappreciated and interesting post-Kantian themes in Nietzsche, especially how Nietzsche reworks Kant’s transcendental methodology and offers an evolutionary epistemology that transforms how we should perceive subjecthood.

Benedetta Zavatta’s essay suggests various ways in which Nietzsche challenges Kant’s universal and a-historical cognitive framework. She argues that reason for Nietzsche is instinctual and developmental. She explains why Nietzsche’s view of language is rooted in

biology, as well as examines Nietzsche's position on empirical concept acquisition and use. The essay is informative, though no specific thesis is defended. Zavatta instead presents a multi-layered examination of how Nietzsche thinks reason and language change over time.

I found some of the claims that Zavatta makes, which are essential to her position, a bit strong. For instance, one section is titled "Reason is one and the same thing as language" (p. 52). Unfortunately, the section contains little on Nietzsche's view of the nature of reason, and the main example Zavatta gives is worrisome. She rehearses the familiar idea that for Nietzsche the subject-predicate structure of our language leads us to believe that the world contains substances that instantiate properties ontologically independent of their substance ground. But given that Nietzsche thinks we can know that this belief about the world is unjustified, or unreasonable, it looks like he denies the claim that reason is identical to language. Reason can come apart from language by, for example, enabling criticism of inferences that turn on problematic interpretations of language.

William Mattioli's piece tackles some key relations between Nietzsche and Afrikan Spir. There is a lot going on in the essay. Mattioli lays out some of Spir's commitments concerning causality, identity, and time. He suggests that some of Nietzsche's early views on cognition turn on reactions to Spir. He explains why Nietzsche's reading of Parmenides is influenced by Spir. He delves into possible sparring matches between Spir and Kant on temporality. Finally, he connects many of these issues to Nietzsche's view of becoming.

The wide variety of subject matter makes the chapter hard to follow—there is no thesis, no proposed plan of argument, no conclusion, and a good deal of digression. Despite these problems, those interested in the topics just listed might want to take a look. The piece is littered

with stimulating arguments, the most stand-out being those that attempt to pin down Spir's complex metaphysics and Nietzsche's early relations to Spir.

João Constâncio's chapter focuses on Nietzsche's view of truth in relation to Kantian philosophy. His reading turns on the idea that Nietzsche embraces certain post-Kantian theses from *BT* to *TI*. These theses, in sum, hold that we only have knowledge of appearances, not things in themselves, which means truth about the way the world is in itself is off limits. Hence metaphysics, which attempts to access such a world, is impossible.

My first worry is that we do not need to conclude that Nietzsche rejects metaphysics merely because he rejects the legitimacy of a metaphysics that posits things in themselves. Nietzsche can reject things in themselves and believe that a different kind of metaphysics is possible. For instance, we might unveil the nature of the world as our concepts organize the world in experience. Constâncio suggests as much, but denies that Nietzsche offers a metaphysics, which is unfortunate.

Constâncio then moves progressively and instructively through Nietzsche's texts showing how Nietzsche, largely influenced by Lange, reconceives metaphysical and epistemological themes in Kant and Schopenhauer. Constâncio trains his eye on the famous falsification thesis, which holds that all our beliefs are false. On his reading, Nietzsche never gives up the falsification thesis, but also claims that our beliefs can be true. How does Constâncio resolve this apparent paradox? In short, he does not: he thinks Nietzsche is intentionally self-contradictory.

I think there is a more plausible answer here (see Remhof, J., "Scientific Fictionalism and the Problem of Inconsistency in Nietzsche," *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, vol. 47, iss. 2, pp.

238–246). For Nietzsche, all conscious representation simplifies because consciousness is conceptual (see *GS* 354). Concepts expedite reference by generalizing over similarities. Simplification, or inexact representation, is falsification. Indeed, Nietzsche often connects the two (see, e.g., *BGE* 24). But an inexact representation can still be accurate. No one is exactly six-foot tall, for instance, given the continuous fluctuation of our backbones, problems of vagueness, etc. Yet it is accurate to say that some people are approximately six feet tall. And Nietzsche seems to think truth is approximate (see *BGE* 34). How does this reconcile simultaneous truth and falsity? An inexact representation can be approximately true. This seems to do justice to the texts, and it shows that Nietzsche has a creative view that does away with paradox.

André Luis Mota Itaparica's piece looks at Nietzsche's rejection of Kant's thing in itself. He first lays out five ways of interpreting Kant's understanding between a thing in itself and appearance. He then presents four of Nietzsche's primary criticisms. The first three criticisms are theoretical and the last is practical-existential.

Here are the criticisms. First, Kant unjustifiably believes there is a causal relation between things in themselves and appearances. Second, Kant unjustifiably posits things in themselves as the essence of appearances. Third, the concept of a thing in itself is contradictory. And fourth, Kant not-so-secretly uses things in themselves to enable moral action.

These objections focus on later notebook passages, which seem to offer far more criticisms than Itaparica examines, and he unfortunately skips over some important published passages, such as *GS* 54. I also wish he could have gotten into greater detail about the practical-existential objection, which seems most significant to Nietzsche. Despite these worries, Itaparica's discussion is useful and the writing is refreshingly crisp and clear.

Mattia Riccardi's chapter examines how Lange and Nietzsche react to Kant's famous claim that a critique of pure reason requires denying knowledge to make room for belief. For Kant the normative realm, specifically the moral realm, is the realm of belief. Lange then reconceives the normative realm as being one of artistic creation which develops historically and culturally. The early Nietzsche, who focuses on cultural rejuvenation, seems to endorse this view, though he mistakenly attributes it to Kant rather than Lange. The later Nietzsche then directly criticizes Kant's version of the realm of belief given that Kant uses the realm to legitimize religious and moral beliefs. Thus the later Nietzsche rejects Kantian normativity, which presents a challenge to views such as Maudemarie Clark and David Dudrick's, as presented in *The Soul of Nietzsche's Beyond Good and Evil*, which links Nietzsche's view of the space of reasons to such normativity.

Riccardi's piece is well-written and well-argued. In fact, I wanted more. For instance, Lange seems to place metaphysics in the realm of the artistic. He calls metaphysics "poetry" because the objects of metaphysical inquiry are merely created and unknowable, like Kant's thing in itself. Nietzsche seems to reconceive this idea in an innovative way: he appears to think that metaphysics proper concerns the nature of reality as it is shaped and arranged according to our needs and interests. Metaphysics artfully engages reality. Exploring this view would be an interesting way to fill out Riccardi's excellent chapter.

Beatrix Himmelmann's article looks at differences between Kant and Nietzsche on teleology. According to Himmelmann, Nietzsche sides with Lange's Darwinian approach to the development of life, which stresses contingency over purpose in nature, whereas Kant defends the practicality of thinking that nature develops purposefully. For Kant human beings have

naturally developed to use reason to educate themselves as a species, which is done best in accordance with certain laws of freedom. Nietzsche of course criticizes any emphasis on freedom, holds that humanity develops from contingent, fundamentally active forces, and believes that meaning and purpose are established by a few creative and strong individuals. Hence Nietzsche is quite far removed from Kant on these grounds.

Himmelman's chapter is informative, despite the fact that she mentions many hot button topics, but offers few details. One thing peculiarly missing from her account is that, while she stresses that for Kant reason is immensely important, she does not investigate Nietzsche's attacks on reason. It would have been interesting to hear her take on Nietzsche's view of the relation between reason, purposiveness, and anti-Darwinism.

Werner Stegmaier explicitly focuses on Kant and Nietzsche's views of reason. Stegmaier first lays out Kant's conception of theoretical reason and what it presupposes—for instance, that reason has a given nature—and proceeds to explore the various ways in which Nietzsche reconceives Kantian reason. For Nietzsche, reason is relative to individuals and develops over time. Nietzsche also divorces reason from freedom, holds that reason comes in degrees, and grounds reason in the body. Stegmaier closes his chapter by examining ways Kant later complicates his own view of reason.

Like other pieces in the volume, Stegmaier's work is educational and multilayered, though no specific thesis is defended. The chapter explores significant relevancies while straightforward arguments are left in the background. It does provide a nice examination of Nietzsche's thoughts on reason in *HH* and *TI*, though does little with *GS*, *BGE* and *GM*. I also

wish a few ideas that Stegmaier mentions were explored in more depth, specifically the interesting idea that for Nietzsche reason is aesthetic.

Tsarina Doyle's chapter argues that Nietzsche's conception of causality develops in response to Kant. According to Doyle, Nietzsche is sensitive to Kant's attempt to overcome Hume's attack on the objective applicability of causality, but finds problems with how Kant renders causality mind-dependent. Will to power offers a way to understand all events as constituted by forces with intrinsic natures, thus preserving the objective applicability of causality. Doyle primarily locates this argument in *BGE* 36 and defends a metaphysical reading of the passage.

Doyle's piece is interesting and certainly worth reading, but I have a few worries. There is scarce textual support for thinking that Nietzsche wants to breathe new life into the objective applicability of causality, and no texts champion the existence of intrinsic properties—*BGE* 36 is not only controversial in its own right, but the idea that something understood “from inside” or according to its “intelligible character” does not imply the existence of intrinsic properties. The intelligible world “from inside” might be entirely comprised of ontologically interdependent properties, for instance.

Moreover, the texts suggest that Nietzsche thinks causality is mind-dependent. In *GS* 112, which Doyle does not examine, Nietzsche suggests that causality is constitutively dependent on human interpreters. The applicability of causality requires “division and dismemberment,” or individuating phenomena into cause and effect (*GS* 112). Indeed, as Nietzsche notes quite clearly: “There is no event in itself. What happens is a group of phenomena selected and synthesized by an interpreting being” (*KSA* 12:1[115]). This neo-Kantian view dovetails nicely



with Nietzsche's position in *BGE* 21 that causality is a "conventional fiction." Doyle overlooks such idealism in Nietzsche—she thinks he rejects all idealism on the grounds that he rejects Berkeleyan idealism (see, e.g., p. 216; 210). I think this is a mistake, as I have argued elsewhere (see Remhof, J., *Nietzsche's Constructivism: A Metaphysics of Material Objects*. New York: Routledge, 2018).

Axel Pichler's piece examines literary issues surrounding Nietzsche's view of Kant in *TI*. Pichler first reviews where and how Nietzsche mentions Kant in *TI* and then examines "'Reason' in Philosophy." Unfortunately, I need to put the brakes on here. I could not figure out what Pichler was trying to do. His reading turns on specific uses of terms like "hypotext" and "the intratextual 'I'" which, as far as I could tell, do little to illuminate Nietzsche. I did not find Pichler's "textual" methodological approach helpful for understanding Nietzsche's philosophical commitments. Those who look at Nietzsche from an analytic perspective might want to steer clear of this chapter, whereas those interested in meta-philosophical literary approaches to Nietzsche should take notice.

Luca Lupo's final chapter looks at self-observation in Kant and Nietzsche. Lupo first shows that Kant was deeply skeptical of the positive effects of self-observation. He then suggests that Nietzsche was too, though for different reasons—Nietzsche's ever-changing, unstable conception of the subject challenges the success of self-observation. In the final part of the chapter Lupo explores Foucault's early thoughts on Nietzsche's view of self-observation. I did not find much new here. The issues Lupo examines are examined in far greater detail by other commentators like Paul Katsafanas, though Lupo does a nice job gathering and presenting Nietzsche's passages (mostly notebook passages) on the topic.

The volume is then a mixed bag, as might be expected—some very good stuff, some less so. Some pieces look at Nietzsche and “the problem of metaphysics” in relation to Kant, and some have nothing to do with it. There is certainly much to learn from the stronger chapters, such as Richardson’s and Riccardi’s, and other chapters are good for niche interests, from Spir to teleology. I find it unfortunate that no commentator explores what might be Nietzsche’s positive view of the possibility of metaphysics, as I mentioned above, and I think it is strange that no commentator focuses on how Nietzsche adopts and reconceives what might be Kant’s most crucial metaphysical insight: the view that our representations function to constitute the very structure of the world (see, e.g., *GS* 57, 58). For those generally interested in the relation between Kant and Nietzsche’s theoretical philosophy, though, this volume is an essential read, and more generally it is a welcome contribution to Nietzsche studies.